

Washington Update November 5, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Educators watched closely this week as local elections around the country provided hints for what may be coming in next year's Congressional midterms and even the 2024 Presidential race. With the victory of Republican Glenn Youngkin for Virginia's next governor, the spotlight was on education issues – particularly parental voice in local education decisions. Issues like Critical Race Theory (which is not taught in VA public schools but used as a proxy for teaching about race), vaccination mandates and school closures, and the rights of transgender students took center stage.

Analysts believe that Youngkin's position on these issues recaptured suburban White women and took him across the finish line, returning control to Republicans for the governorship for the first time in 12 years. Republican strategists are studying the election to determine if education will be a winning issue for them in upcoming elections. As advocates, we can use our voices to offer all policy makers and candidates our education expertise, scholarship, and experiences as we take our places in the policy dialogue.

1. Will Reconciliation Make it to the Finish Line?

As of Friday morning, all eyes are on the House of Representatives where Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) is working overtime to schedule a vote today on both the bipartisan infrastructure bill (which has already passed the Senate) and the partisan reconciliation bill (which has passed neither body but is being intensely negotiated behind the scenes). Pelosi can afford to lose only three Democratic votes and still pass the bills.

The failure to pass these bills prior to this week's local and state elections was considered by many a factor in key Democratic losses, such as the Virginia governorship. Also, President Biden had hoped to go to the COP26 international climate change conference in Glasgow with passage of the bill in tow – since it includes a number of climate change mitigation provisions. These two lapses have served to ratchet up the pressure for passage to a frenzied level. If passage does not occur in the House today, it is virtually impossible for the bills to become law before the end of the year – since the Senate will need time to review the reconciliation bill and other “must dos” will overtake the Congressional calendar.

Even if the House does pass the reconciliation bill today, the Senate must then pass it. This remains an ongoing question mark. On Monday, Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) said that he would not be pressured into supporting his party's more progressive social spending bill and pushed for a vote on the bipartisan infrastructure bill that is not linked to the Build Back Better Agenda. "I'm open to supporting a final bill that helps move our country forward. But I'm equally open to voting against a bill that hurts our country," Manchin said, citing inflation and budget deficits as his main concerns. “I will not support a reconciliation package that expands social programs and irresponsibly adds to

our \$29 trillion in national debt.” In a statement the White House said it remains “confident that the plan will gain Senator Manchin’s support” — which it will need, if the bill is to pass in a 50/50 divided Senate.

Keep in mind that just last week the White House released a new framework that cut the topline number down from \$3.5 trillion to just over \$1.75 trillion. The original House reconciliation bill included \$194 billion for education funding, the [revised framework](#) released last week pares that number down to just \$21 billion, with the biggest omissions for education coming from school construction, free community college, college retention and completion grants, career and technical education, and adult education and literacy.

Program	Funding in Millions
GrowYour Own	\$112.68
Teacher Residencies	\$112.27
Principals /SLRPS	\$112.27
Hawkins	\$112.27
IDEA-D-PP	\$160.78
Total	\$610.26

While some proposals were left behind, many of the President’s education priorities will remain — including key educator workforce initiatives such as IDEA-D-Personal Preparation, Grow Your Own programs, Teacher Residencies, and the Augustus F. Hawkins Centers of Excellence.

Key Education Workforce Programs Remaining in the Current Version of the Reconciliation Bill:

Education and disability rights advocates are actively supporting the reconciliation package. In a [statement](#) Maria Town, President and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities noted the investment in home and community based services “...will improve the lives of disabled people, our families, and direct support workers. If passed, this negotiated package is a critical down payment towards fully realizing the rights conferred to people with disabilities by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Olmstead Decision. We are excited about the potential for significant progress in a decades-long fight by disabled people for the right to live our lives and receive services in our own homes and communities”

Stay tuned for the next chapter in this ongoing drama.

2. Advocacy Action Alert

[The Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\)](#) has created an advocacy action alert in response to the proposed historic increases to programs for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, including starting the glide path to fully funding IDEA. To make these proposals a reality, they will need all the support they can get. Help us build momentum for these proposals to get them over the finish line. You can easily and efficiently reach your member of Congress by simply plugging in your information through the link above.

3. Job Opportunity

[The National Center for Learning Disabilities \(NCLD\)](#) has an opening for a newly created position within the organization: The Director of Research and Innovation. This person will be responsible for leading the development and execution of critical research and innovation initiatives that advance NCLD's strategic plan and policy objectives. The successful Director will be part leader and part doer. The Director will be charged with shaping and implementing activities that reflect evidence-based research and practice and advance opportunities for NCLD to influence and provide leadership across disciplines including, but not limited to, public policy and advocacy, postsecondary transition and pathways to employment, parent empowerment, young adult leadership, and innovation in special education. PhD in education, social sciences, disability, or other related-areas is preferred.

4. New Resources

- [The Learning Policy Institute](#) is out with a new brief that presents the evidence for restorative approaches and describes what they look like in schools. It also addresses questions about what it takes to shift the culture of schools and build the capacity of school practitioners to successfully implement restorative practices.
- [The RAND Corporation](#) released findings from a new survey this week which found that fewer than 30 percent of middle and high school teachers strongly agreed that they knew where to find information for interventions to support students experiencing poverty, English language learners, and anti-racist instruction and materials.

Wishing you all the best for this glorious Fall weekend. Don't forget to "fall back" tomorrow night and gain an hour of sleep as daylight savings time switches over.

All the best,

Jane and Kait

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